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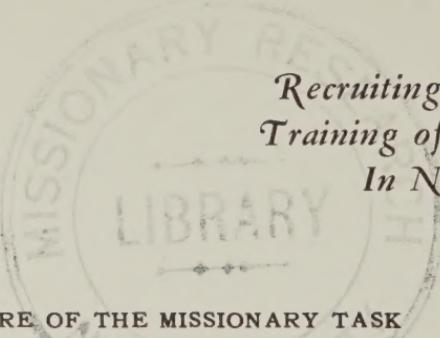
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Recruiting, Selection and Training of Missionaries In North America

*A paper for study and reference prepared by the
Secretary of the Committee on Missionary Personnel
of the Division of Foreign Missions, NCCC*



Recruiting, Selection and Training of Missionaries In North America

THE NATURE OF THE MISSIONARY TASK

The missionary task has always been central in the church, but the missionary idea precedes the coming of Christ into the world. Although it may be argued that the Old Testament is the record of God's dealings with the Hebrew people, yet the whole of the Old Testament teaches that one true God created the universe and is concerned with the salvation of all men. The Book of Jonah is a great missionary book, reminding its readers of God's love for all who do not yet know him.

The writers of the New Testament are all concerned with the Christian mission to all men. This teaching is made most explicit in Acts and in the letters of St. Paul, but is also implicit in the Gospels, which tell of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The early Christians were witnesses to the new life in Christ. Paul wrote, "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel." So it has been from the first century. Those whose lives have been transformed by the living Lord cannot help telling others about Him. This is the essential missionary task.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MISSIONARY

In Douglas Webster's booklet, "What is a Missionary?", published by the Church Missionary Society in England, four qualifications of the modern missionary are listed.

The missionary must have a personal knowledge of Jesus Christ. Missionaries do not go to spread opinions, but to witness to their faith, not only by what they say, but through a quality of life which proves the genuineness of this faith.

Then the missionary must have a capacity to interpret the Gospel. This matter of the communication of Christianity to people whose language is different from that of the missionary, and whose cultural heritage has not been the same, is a problem to be solved by missionaries of every generation. This will involve translating the Gospel into the thought forms and traditions of another people.

It will entail much listening and learning, and identification with people of another race. All this is, perhaps, the severest test of the missionary's abilities and of his very being, and the part of his task in which he is most apt to fail.

Another qualification of the missionary, not new but perhaps more important now than at some periods in the past, is an awareness about the kind of world in which we live. Part of the unique value of the missionary to the church he serves is that he comes from outside it and can bring to it the more mature judgment of one who has probably had a more thorough education and more standards of comparison than those among whom he lives. Part of his task is to read the signs of the times and to interpret them wisely.

In the fourth place, the missionary must be ready to make the universal Church a reality. A missionary is a gift of one church to another. Both the sending and the receiving churches are enriched by such a personal gift. In such an act of giving and receiving, local churches in different countries are made conscious of their being part of the universal Church. It is through the missionary that such a great idea becomes a reality, and if he is deeply aware of his role his witness is very meaningful to him and to others.

THE FOREIGN MISSIONARY VOCATION

There are a number of factors which make missionary work overseas something distinctive. It differs from work in the home church because it entails crossing a national boundary and communicating with people who speak a language different from that of the missionary's native tongue. The task involves Christian witness and meaningful communication to people whose religious and cultural heritages have been different from those of the missionary. Moreover, such witness and communication are motivated by the conviction of the missionary that God's loving revelation in Christ is final and unique so that His purpose is to persuade people to become Christians. In many countries, the consequences of a change in religion are so serious for the convert, as for example in most Muslim lands, that few have ventured to take the step.

The missionary's life is one of great interest, challenge and usually of much variety. But it can only be undertaken in faith, and indeed only in the conviction that this particular task is the one for which he has been chosen. In spite of the convenience of

travel in the modern world and improved living conditions in many countries abroad, the missionary vocation entails distinctive strains and requires unusual Christian grace. The adjustment to life among a strange people, often in a tropical climate, and the need to learn a new language constitute real difficulties. Separation from family and friends and the obligation to live with people whom one might never have chosen as associates are part of missionary life. Most missionaries are desperately lonely at times. When children are still quite young, they often must be sent away to school. Most missionaries do not regard their life as one of sacrifice, but one must be *willing* for any sacrifice, and prepared for it.

No true missionary would claim that his work is of a higher spiritual order than that of other Christians. Some very humble people who pray regularly and in faith for God's blessing on the labors of missionaries may be doing more important spiritual work than the missionaries themselves. But the point being stressed here is that *some are chosen and prepared to be missionaries* for a very specialized part of the Church's work and this work constitutes a distinctive Christian vocation. *This means that special provision must always be made by the Church to insure that its foreign mission responsibility receives proper emphasis. The nature of this part of the Church's total work must be defined and publicized.* Special efforts must be made to recruit missionaries for this task, and to raise funds for their support. The overseas missionary work of the church should be recognized by *all Christians* as an essential aspect of the Church's mission, and by *some Christians* in every age as their personal responsibility.

RECRUITING PROTESTANT MISSIONARIES IN NORTH AMERICA

For about one hundred and fifty years the Protestant churches of North America have been sending missionaries to almost every part of the inhabited world. At the beginning of this period the numbers were very small, but since the last decades of the nineteenth century from 1,000 to 2,000 new missionaries have been appointed each year. A large percentage of those being recruited are missionaries of Member Boards of the Division of Foreign Missions. In recent years the proportion of North American missionaries sent out by independent inter-denominational societies shows a significant increase. 1956 statistics compiled by the Missionary Research

Library list the total number of North American missionaries at work as 23,432. Of these 43.5% are missionaries of Member Boards of the Division of Foreign Missions and 56.5% are appointed by other missionary organizations. In 1956, boards associated with the Division of Foreign Missions sent 631 more missionaries than in 1952. But in the same year, independent societies sent 4,170 more missionaries than in 1952.

Another significant trend in the modern missionary enterprise is that the total share in it of the North American churches, compared with the European share, has increased greatly, and particularly since World War II. The American proportion of the total Protestant missionary force has increased from 34% in 1911 to 67.5% in 1956.

Much more important than the *numbers* of missionaries sent abroad by the North American churches is the Christian character and dedication of those who go. There is not much doubt that the great majority of those who have offered their lives for Christian service abroad have been people of fine character, often with the highest academic attainments, who felt called of God to share the unsearchable riches of Christ with those who had never had the opportunity to know of the Gospel. From the days when the first missionary societies or boards were formed in this country, it has been clearly understood that the Gospel could only be mediated through persons. *The first concern of each mission board was, and still is, the discovery of young Christians who have had a vital Christian experience and who by example and by word desire to communicate Christian truth to people in other countries who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord.*

The conditions of missionary service have changed beyond recognition since a century ago, but the motivation of the missionary and the difficulty of communicating the Gospel through the media of strange language and culture are still central in the missionary enterprise. *The work of the missionary societies can only continue through the recruiting of new people to continue the task, people with some qualifications different from the missionaries of a hundred years ago, but no less sure of their mission and their message.*

HOW ARE NEW MISSIONARIES RECRUITED.

The main issue in the recruiting of missionaries is how to find qualified candidates. In most of the mission boards and societies

in North America the task of recruiting missionaries finds its focus in the office of the candidate secretary. In many cases the original contact between the secretary and the candidate arises from an inquiry from the young person concerned. In other cases the initiative may be taken by someone who feels he has discovered a potential missionary. This may be the pastor of a church a teacher or some other person. *The candidate secretaries who have the largest number of possible missionaries on their lists are those who have the greatest number of unofficial helpers constantly engaged in the search for suitable candidates.*

RECRUITING NOW, COMPARED WITH THE PAST.

In order to understand the situation with respect to missionary recruiting today, it is almost necessary to compare the present with the period from 1850 to 1900. Now every denomination has its mission board. Such mission boards have had experience for a period of perhaps a hundred years, or at least fifty. Normally the foreign mission board is integrated into the total church organization and receives an agreed share of the denomination's benevolence budget. In other words, the foreign mission board is an accepted part of the church's organization, with a paid staff and an understanding on the part of the denomination that it should have a budget and should always have in its various fields abroad qualified missionaries. Comparing this situation with that which existed sixty to seventy-five years ago, the main difference is that at *that* time pressure was being exerted upon the denominations or upon local congregations by young people who had become enthused by the great new missionary movement of that time. They had probably come under the influence of such Christian leaders as Dwight L. Moody, John R. Mott or Robert E. Speer, or attended a Student Volunteer Movement Convention. While in those many denominations already had foreign mission boards, nevertheless much of the impetus and pressure to carry forward the Christian mission came from the Christian convictions alive in the Church and manifested through the enthusiasm and initiative of Christian students. Today the highly organized mission boards are seeking sufficient new missionaries to staff the work now well established. A considerable part of the money comes from a unified budget, much of it given by people who have little interest in overseas missions.

Another difference in the situation today is that the work of the modern missionary is being largely determined by the churches in Asia and Africa which are asking for the cooperation but not the initiative of missionaries from the west. Seventy-five years ago the most compelling feature of the missionary appeal was the obligation to preach the Gospel where no Christians of the area were in a position to take the initiative. Now the situation is entirely different. In almost every country or area to which missionaries go from North America there is in existence an indigenous church. In most cases, it is this church which is requesting the mission boards to find missionaries for specific tasks to be done in cooperation with the Christians of the country. This situation poses a rather difficult problem, because there is scarcely an area to which missionaries are sent in which there is not a very large non-Christian population. In most of the countries of Asia and Africa the indigenous church is unable to cope with the unfinished evangelistic task. But there is often a danger that it will concern itself overmuch with the nurture of its own membership and ask for the assistance of missionaries from abroad in this task, to the neglect of reaching the unevangelized.

One of the most interesting aspects of the present situation in North America as it pertains to the recruiting of young people for missionary service abroad is that many of the jobs for which candidates are being sought do not particularly appeal to adventurous young people. It is partly a question of their concern that they will not have sufficient opportunity for initiative. Some of them also feel that there are new frontiers of Christian witness both at home and abroad, which the Church is not undertaking because all of its effort is being channeled into the relationships with indigenous churches. It is encouraging to note that a good many young Christian students are impatient, as were their predecessors, with the status quo and perhaps new life and new methods will come out of the sincere efforts of today's Christian students.

THE NEED FOR NEW MISSIONARIES

Amid the new conditions which prevail today and which have been briefly described above, the first priority in the candidate departments of most mission boards is to find a stated number of candidates to fill positions now vacant. There is always the need to replace missionaries who have died, retired or had to leave the field because of health or other reasons. The more urgent need,

however, is to find young people to work in cooperation with responsible Christians in what are generally called the "Younger Churches." Nearly all the well organized candidate departments of mission boards have in their files applications from a larger number of young people than they can appoint. However, the great majority of these applications are from people the board would not consider suitable for appointment. To put it another way, every mission board is constantly searching for candidates with better qualifications and greater dedication. *Furthermore, some candidate secretaries, particularly in the larger denominations, are convinced that there are Christian young people in the colleges and seminaries and also in professional life in this country who, if they could be found, have the God-given gifts of the missionary for this age.* Every candidate secretary, therefore, is using every means he can think of to discover persons who might be challenged by present opportunities for Christian service overseas.

THE AGE OF DECISION

An important aspect of recruiting of missionaries is that of the age at which young people are likely to decide upon their life work. Some who eventually are appointed as missionaries have made a decision in high school or even earlier. *It is much more common, however, for missionary candidates to think seriously about work abroad in the later stages of their college course or even when they are doing graduate work, either in theology or in some other faculty.*

The conditions abroad, where the "Younger Churches" are asking for persons with quite specific qualifications, make it somewhat more difficult than in the past to appeal to young people in school or even in college. However, there is a considerable difference even now in the procedures in various mission boards in regard to the age at which they expect to make the first meaningful contact with missionary candidates.

EARLY MARRIAGE

It is common today, for young people to marry earlier than was the case in the past. In part, this is the result of an economic situation very different from that which prevailed in the years of depression and it also differs from the situation which was common fifty or seventy-five years ago, when appointees were encouraged, or even required, to go out single. *The fact that most young people*

marry earlier means that mission boards are appointing persons who already have one or more children. This of itself poses problems which were not met to the same extent in the recent past.

EMPHASIS UPON EXPERIENCE IN THE UNITED STATES.

Another quite important factor in the recruiting of missionaries for overseas work today is the increasing emphasis upon the search for persons who have already had experience in work at home. In the past it was customary to appoint young people concerning whom the board was satisfied as to their Christian character, motivation and evidence that the young people were active in some kind of Christian work and witness in the colleges and in the churches. Today, where the "Younger Churches" are asking for people who can help them with specific tasks, there is more emphasis upon a search for people who have already engaged in some kind of work in the home country. *This means that for a minister it is desirable to have some pastoral experience in a congregation, for a teacher in a school, and for a doctor the maximum rather than the minimum of clinical experience. It will thus be seen that the tendency is to appoint older people than were being sent out a generation ago.* One of the reasons in the past for urging young people to go abroad as soon as possible was that it would be easier to learn the language. Now, while there is as much emphasis as ever on the need to acquire a good knowledge of the language, experience has shown that people can learn, if they have the aptitude, at thirty or over, though not as easily as if they were younger.

THE CHRISTIAN LAYMAN WORKING ABROAD

A new dimension of the Christian mission which may well be considered under the heading of recruiting is the part in it to be played by the Christian layman. The modern western church, with its clergy, and its local, regional and national organization, has contributed to the common assumption that it is the responsibility of the paid church worker to do all the church's work. One of the most encouraging trends in Christian thinking today is the renewed emphasis upon the place of the layman in the Church's work and witness. *In particular, there is a growing awareness that the influence of lay Christians whose work takes them abroad may be even more important than that of missionaries appointed by the denominations.*

In the past, not many lay Christians were employed in positions outside of North America. Today the numbers of those whose business takes them abroad is in the hundreds of thousands, perhaps ten or more times as many as all the missionaries at work in various parts of the world. It has not been usual in the past for business men to think that their work abroad was related in any way to the Christian mission. Business and the work of missionaries have tended to be kept in separate compartments. Not only so, but the viewpoint of the missionary and that of the business man have often been in sharp conflict. It was common in many areas where foreign business men were in residence for them to resent the presence of missionaries and for the missionary to feel that the business man, perhaps from his own country, was one of his biggest problems.

The changing world situation has brought all these issues into new focus. A considerable number of American business and professional people who have been abroad have begun to take an interest in Christian work and, in many cases, their testimony has been a powerful factor in the recruiting of missionaries as well as in the changing for the better of relationships and conditions in many parts of the world. In this whole realm much remains to be done, but this document would not be complete without reference to the important place of the Christian layman in the Church's world mission. *The need for educating both laity and clergy concerning the responsibility of Christian laymen who go abroad, and the desirability of arranging for some Christian training or orientation for such people, is widely recognized.*

SELECTION OF MISSIONARIES

In the selection of missionaries for overseas service, the boards related to the Division of Foreign Missions are concerned to secure persons whose academic and spiritual qualifications are of the highest order. In many cases, the boards are asked by the indigenous churches abroad to find people qualified to do specific kinds of work. While it is not possible to generalize, it is, nevertheless, a common situation that many mission boards these days have money in their budgets for more people than they can find with the requisite qualifications. *To put it in another way, a good many mission boards can find or raise money when they are sure they have dedicated and qualified young people to send as missionaries.*

The long experience of mission boards in dealing with candidates has resulted in the working out of a rather elaborate process of selection. Through the Missionary Personnel Committee candidate blanks have been prepared. There are suitable forms to be sent to people at almost any stage of the process. When a candidate has reached the point where he or she desires to apply for missionary service he fills out a long form called "Application for Missionary Service." After this has been received from the candidate the board generally sends letters to a number of people whom he has named as references. If, on the side of the mission board, there is a feeling that the candidate is a person likely to be considered seriously, then one or more personal interviews are arranged.

A good deal of stress is laid upon the candidate's own account of his or her religious experience and convictions. At one time many boards asked candidates to give answers to a number of specific doctrinal questions. *In recent years there has been more emphasis upon asking the candidate to tell about his religious experience and convictions in his own words, in the form of an essay or autobiography.*

A problem common with candidate secretaries is the matter of references. It is difficult to evaluate the judgments of people who write about a candidate. It is not easy to tell whether the persons who send references really know the candidate intimately. For example, the candidate may give as a reference a minister of a congregation where his family attended church when he was in school. Such a minister may quite honestly send a favorable recommendation based upon his knowledge of the candidate perhaps ten years ago. In the circumstances, a letter from a person who may have known the candidate for a much shorter time, but in a more intimate fashion and also at the time when the candidate is making application, is much more valuable. Mission boards continue to use old procedures in selection which have proven of value for a long period. The candidate blanks have been revised from time to time and other changes have been made where experience has warranted them.

For some years many boards have been using psychological tests and occasionally also psychiatric interviews. This new method is not a substitute for older procedures, but a new check in

addition to and coordinated with methods that have formerly been in use. Boards that have been experimenting with psychological tests and psychiatric interviews in recent years have all felt that the additional expense has been fully justified, so that this new type of selective procedure will undoubtedly be continued. The testing procedures are being improved constantly and the experience gained is being reviewed by candidate secretaries in conference with psychologists and psychiatrists.

Every candidate secretary knows that the relations between the mission board and the candidate entail a great deal of paper work and much patience, both on the part of the candidate and of those who deal with him on behalf of the board. *Often the relationship continues over a period of several years.* Experienced secretaries are able to give valuable advice to the candidates as they select their college and post graduate courses. Some mission boards make scholarship grants, where needed, to candidates once they have reached an advanced stage of academic preparation for missionary service.

TRAINING MISSIONARIES FOR SERVICE OVERSEAS

In numerous conferences concerning the training of missionaries it has been agreed that there are at least three stages. One of these is the preparation before the missionary goes abroad, which, of course, includes the whole of his or her education up to that time. The second stage is the first term abroad. The third part is study on the first furlough and, of course, continuous reading and study thereafter. While the implementation of this plan varies greatly, it is interesting to note that for at least twenty years almost every statement formulated by responsible persons concerning missionary training mentions these three parts of the process.

It may be assumed that all who have a serious concern about missionary training believe that there should be religious or spiritual preparation of the missionary and also due attention to what may be called the more technical subjects. The emphasis laid upon religious training varies a good deal. Some missionaries and undoubtedly some of the mission boards assume that a person would not have applied for life time missionary service without such an offer's being based on very strong religious convictions. People who have such assumptions are likely to underrate the need for Bible study and a thorough theological understanding of

the missionary task. On the other hand a good many missionary societies and organizations believe that thorough religious preparation is so important that most of the training should be devoted to this part of the missionary's preparation. *This factor is mentioned to draw attention to the need for proper balance between the religious and other parts of missionary preparation.*

A rather important segment of missionary preparation is that part which a student has as an *undergraduate* in college. There is a sense in which a college course, for those fortunate enough to go, is a preparation for anything that the student may do in later life. For the missionary, even where he is not aware when in college that he will be a missionary, it still constitutes general missionary preparation, particularly if it is a liberal arts course. However, if a young person has already decided that he wants to a missionary, much can be done in college through the selection of courses which will be helpful in later life. There are rather severe limitations in this matter where the candidate is in a small college, but if the liberal arts course is taken in a large university a student can select one or more languages which will be helpful and possibly area and other studies. *It will be seen that the specific use of the time a student spends as an undergraduate as related to missionary preparation will depend on two factors:(1) whether he knows he is preparing for missionary experience, and (2) whether courses are offered in his college which are pertinent in missionary training.*

For the missionary who is going to be doing religious or church work, as distinguished from educational, medical or agricultural work, the part of his training received in *seminary* is of great importance. There is, of course, a great difference in seminaries, as in colleges. Many of the seminaries today have one and sometimes more staff members giving full time to courses on Christian missions. *While such courses are offered or often required for the instruction of all seminary students, they can be of significant value to those preparing for missionary service overseas.* In some of the larger seminaries, such as Yale, Union in New York, Princeton and a number of others, a student preparing for missionary service abroad can specialize and receive valuable missionary training.

There are a number of institutions in North America which specialize in missionary training. Some of these offer a comprehensive curriculum which includes comparative religions, area studies and

linguistics, while others concentrate on one or more aspects of missionary preparation. Most of the emphasis upon adequate missionary training stems from the stimulus of the Edinburgh missionary conference in 1910. Such courses as those offered at The Kennedy School of Missions in Hartford, Scarritt College for Christian Workers in Nashville and the Canadian School of Missions in Toronto, as well as the courses and conferences on Rural Missions at Cornell University, have all been influenced, directly or indirectly, by the stress laid upon missionary preparation at that conference.

For some years recently, and notably in the period during and after the Second World War, the Missionary Personnel Committee gave considerable time to a study of missionary training institutions and courses. As a result, a list of approved and recommended institutions and courses was drawn up in 1950. While there has been no slackening of interest in missionary preparation among responsible people connected with mission boards, *there is a strong feeling that changing conditions require many adaptations in missionary training*. Some of the new factors in the situation are considered in the following paragraphs.

In considering institutional facilities for missionary training, account must be taken of the great number of courses being offered in American universities which could form an important part of a missionary's preparation for work abroad. Many universities are now offering highly specialized courses in area and related studies. It would be impossible to list here even the universities which offer a comprehensive list of courses in the history, geography, culture and languages of Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Middle East. In the field of language study alone, universities in the United States have expert teachers in all the principal languages of Asia and the Middle East, as well as those of Europe. It would probably be possible for missionaries going to most parts of the world to secure accurate and valuable information at one or more universities before leaving the United States. But the courses which have been planned, and are now being offered, were not in most cases designed for missionaries. *Generally such courses as have been described above would prove most useful to a missionary on furlough, who would bring some field experience to his study, and who would be able to select his courses more wisely than the person who has not yet been abroad.* However, some of the language courses and some of the area and other studies are being recommended for missionary

candidates. The whole field of courses which might prove useful in missionary preparation, both for undergraduates and post-graduate students, is being reviewed to the extent that is possible by the Missionary Personnel Committee. *When enough is known about new courses which are proving useful they are commended to the secretaries of the various mission boards.*

In most of the countries or areas where missionaries have been working for many years, institutions have been established for missionary preparation. These schools are primarily organized to teach the language, and generally they are supported by several denominations. In most cases, such schools have courses on the history and culture of the region. *In the French, Belgian and Portuguese colonial areas in Africa experience has shown that missionaries should learn the language and something about colonial history and policy in Europe before going to Africa.*

There is a factor in the preparation of American young people for service overseas which pertains to missionaries and also to those going abroad on military service, in business or on government assignment. The United States is involved as never before in world affairs. Hundreds of thousands of Americans are engaged in work which involves lengthy periods of residence abroad, and inevitable close relationships with people of other races and cultures. At the same time, there is an increasing emphasis, both conscious and unconscious, upon the American way of life. Young people now going abroad have become accustomed to the highest material standard of living the world has ever known. They are too young to remember the depression. They then go to countries where poverty is the condition of the majority of the people, and likely to be the major concern of the government. There are many other differences to be experienced and not a few misunderstandings to be cleared up. This situation, in which the young American must make radical adjustments, is not entirely new but it is more critical than ever before. More people, here and abroad, are aware of it. No university, seminary or even a missionary training college can deal adequately with this problem. *For this reason, the Army, the State Department, the business firm and the mission board must plan orientation courses tailored to deal with the situations into which their young appointees will be plunged as they go overseas for the first time.*

SHORT TERM MISSIONARY ORIENTATION

For many years the Foreign Missions Conference and later the Division of Foreign Missions, NCCC, held a one week Outgoing Missionary Conference under the auspices of the Missionary Personnel Committee. It was generally held in June. It was attended by about one hundred and fifty young people of some fifteen denominations, related to the Division of Foreign Missions. It was primarily an inspirational gathering for interdenominational fellowship, but it was planned to give as much pertinent information as possible. Most of those who attended were missionaries under appointment, planning to leave for their respective fields very shortly.

Candidate and other mission board secretaries had for some time felt the need for an orientation program which would be much more comprehensive than the one week Outgoing Missionary Conference. The main reason for this was the discovery that the great majority of those attending the one week Outgoing Missionary Conference had not had any specific missionary training. While institutions such as Hartford and Scarritt have long been in existence, a comparatively small proportion of newly appointed missionaries have been sent to these institutions. It must be remembered that not more than a third of the missionaries being appointed are graduates of seminaries. *It may, therefore, be assumed that the wives of these seminary graduates, plus most missionaries appointed for educational, medical and agricultural work, have not had training other than their professional preparation.* This professional training is in most cases not specially designed for missionaries, but rather for students intending to work in the United States.

In the summer of 1953 a six week orientation or missionary training course was begun under the auspices of the Division of Foreign Missions, NCCC. Those who attended were about one hundred and twenty missionaries already appointed by some twelve mission boards related to the Division of Foreign Missions. The course consisted of Bible study, a section called "The Missionary Task," area studies and introduction to language study. The experiment begun in 1953 commended itself to all the boards concerned to such a degree that the course has been continued in each year since.

While the greatest intangible benefit of this orientation period is the fellowship of young people of many different denominations dedicated to a common task, the expenditure of time and money

would not be justified unless the content of the course were of high quality. It has been possible to secure some of the best available teachers in the United States and many from abroad to lead intensive courses in Bible study, the nature of the Missionary Task, area studies and introduction to the study of language.

Experience has shown that this kind of orientation is particularly valuable for those who have not had specific missionary training in college or seminary. It is equally valuable for those who have had some previous training, because if there is repetition it occurs in the most important aspects of missionary preparation. During the four years that this orientation course has been carried on at Allegheny College, Meadville, Pennsylvania, a good many changes have been made in the light of experience. However, the core of the curriculum has been retained and changes have been designed to improve each part of the course.

It is the conviction of those concerned with planning the orientation course at Meadville that the by-products of this experiment in missionary training are perhaps even more important than what is actually accomplished for those who take the six weeks course. It is evident now that the six week period is not adequate for missionary preparation or even orientation. While much can be done in six weeks it is only part of a much longer process.

NEW PLANS FOR MISSIONARY TRAINING

During these four years each of the boards which sends missionaries to Meadville has given much more careful consideration than formerly to the whole subject of missionary preparation. The result in some cases has been to give missionaries a whole year of preparation, sometimes instead of Meadville, sometimes in addition to Meadville. More than one board has decided, in part because of what has been done at Meadville, to begin new and comprehensive courses of missionary preparation. *It is both interesting and significant that as the Meadville curriculum has been improved it has been integrated with or related to other and much more adequate schemes of missionary preparation by a number of boards in the Division of Foreign Missions.* (This subject is being dealt with in a separate pamphlet, entitled "New Trends in Missionary Preparation.")

The description above of the orientation program for missionaries carried on at Meadville leads to consideration of how well

anyone can be prepared in the United States for work in a country where language, customs and culture are totally different. The program at Meadville is planned so that the young people will be taught part of the time by Christians from various countries. *They will thus be prepared in some degree to understand points of view different from their own, and more important, to learn at this stage of their preparation from Christians of the countries to which they will be going later.* But it is one thing to have an Indian teacher for a limited time in America, and quite another to be plunged into the many experiences, the happy and the frustrating, of living among the people of India.

Those concerned with the planning of courses of training for missionaries will always have to take many factors into account especially the issue of when preparation in America should cease and preparation in Asia, Africa or elsewhere should begin. In this matter, the availability of training facilities in America and abroad and comparing one with the other will always be a subject for study. It will also be necessary to know the individual candidate and his or her needs. Sometimes the length of the study period, and the place where it must be done will be decided by factors outside the control of the mission board. But where there are two or more good programs to be weighed, the needs of the candidate, including an understanding as to whether he has reached the saturation point in study in this country, should be taken into account. *Some well recognized courses designed for missionaries may in some cases be taken before a person goes abroad while in other cases the same course might prove of greater value if taken during the first furlough.*

THE TASK OF THE MISSIONARY PERSONNEL COMMITTEE IN THE YEARS AHEAD

As one reviews the documents retained in the committee files for the last twenty years, it is apparent that most of the issues which are now listed on agenda for meetings were often considered in the past. It is not surprising that so long as missionaries are being appointed by mission boards their recruitment, selection and training should be matters for concern and consultation. In the making of plans at any given time, the changing conditions in the United States and abroad must constantly be kept in mind. The members of the committee, and the secretary, must try to understand changes which are taking place and their significance for

each new group of missionaries.

While the task of the committee is in the main to concentrate on those aspects of the *selection and training* of missionaries which are of concern to member boards at any given time, consideration might well be given to certain aspects of *recruiting* for missionary service abroad. The selection of missionaries depends always upon having a sufficient number of applicants for service from which to make the selection. If a number of boards are finding that the supply of candidates is too small in numbers, or deficient as to quality, might some kinds of joint effort through the Missionary Personnel Committee be attempted? It may be that some new literature should be prepared to supplement that which each board must publish, or that in some other projects joint effort in the realm of recruiting would be useful.

In the selection of missionaries, consultation on procedures has resulted in the preparation and wide use of approved candidate blanks. Recent study of the use of psychological testing and interviews by psychiatrists has led to sharing of experience to the benefit of many boards. Much more needs to be done in this field, still comparatively new. It may be that a good deal could yet be learned, and applied to the processing of candidates, from commercial and other agencies in the techniques of personnel procedures. New work is being done with language aptitude tests and it is probable that with the improvement of these tests their usefulness as an aid in the selection of new missionaries will soon be much greater than at present.

In the training of missionaries for their work abroad, it is evident that the Meadville orientation program has proved helpful and practical. It is equally clear after four years of experience that the program needs constant study and that changes should be made when the conditions of missionary service are modified. Such changes may be in the area studies, possibly because of changed political conditions or because numbers of missionaries being appointed to an area rise and fall. Changes in the Meadville program may also be called for to coordinate it with new training facilities available in America or abroad.

As far as possible, the vast range of studies in universities in North America based on the culture and languages of Asia, Africa and Latin America should be evaluated for their contribution to

missionary preparation. At the same time, more information is needed about the curricula of many missionary language schools abroad so that training here may be better coordinated with that of institutions established at a time when few courses in languages and cultural subjects were available in American universities.

The subject of training for the American Christian layman who goes abroad in government service or on business needs much careful study. Whether or not this vast field is one in which the Missionary Personnel Committee should become deeply involved is a matter which awaits decision. Whatever may be done needs to be coordinated with plans of other departments in the National Council of Churches, as well as with the efforts of denominations. It can be said with assurance that the Missionary Personnel Committee must not remain aloof from concern with the role of the American layman in the Christian mission, but it must also avoid measures which might result in too deep an involvement in this important new task.

Published in 1957 for the
Committee on Missionary Personnel
by the Division of Foreign Missions, NCCC
156 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.